

# East Texas PMC News

This newsletter is a semi-annual publication of the USDA/NRCS East Texas Plant Materials Center in Nacogdoches, Texas **Address:** 6598 FM 2782 **Zip:** 75964 **Phone:** (936) 564-4873

## Spring Edition (March 2008)

### PLANT MATERIALS PRESENTATION FOR CIVIC ORGANIZATION

Alan Shadow was invited to give a presentation to the Kiwanians Club in Henderson, Texas on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Alan gave a brief overview of the Plant Materials Program's history and mission, and discussed current projects being conducted at The East Texas Plant Materials Center. Alan spoke about the selection process used to generate released varieties of native plants, and some of the attributes specific plants have that fill conservation needs in the East Texas service area. Biofuels were also discussed, and information on how native grasses could be used to supply ethanol for fuel was presented. Alan presented some of the pros and cons of

using native grasses as opposed to corn, and the use of cold season legumes to supply the nitrogen needs instead of nitrogen fertilizer. He also gave an overview of the short term woody rotation project being conducted with Steven F. Austin State University for phytoremediation of phosphorus, and how it related to the disposal of chicken litter.



Above: Austrian winter pea and 'Alamo' switchgrass plot in the Cool Season Legume Biofuel Study at the ETPMC.

### ETPMC ESTABLISHES HARDWOOD STUDIES ON WRP ACRES

In an effort to learn more about success or failure of hardwood establishment on Wetland Reserve Program acres, the ETPMC, New Boston Field Office, and Ray Stoner are cooperating on two studies. The first study will involve the comparison of hand planted seedlings vs. machine planted seedlings. This study involves Nuttall oak, willow oak, Shumard oak and sweet pecan. Data will be collected on seedling growth and establishment. The other study will involve the scalping (removal) of vegetative materials; rhizomes, stolons, and root matter, to an approximated 4 inch depth. This will hopefully limit competition with the hardwood seedlings during the first year of establishment. Growth and establishment data will be compared to seedlings that are planted into nonscalped areas.



Above from left: Alan Shadow and Jim Stevens plant hardwood seedlings

## ONE OF THE NEW STUDIES FOR SPRING

The ETPMC is cooperating with Texas Agrilife Research to conduct a prairie acacia (*Acacia angustissima* var. *hirta*) and Crockett herbaceous mimosa germplasm evaluation. This study will compare forage production, quality, and seed production of Crockett herbaceous mimosa select germplasm and three lines of prairie acacia germplasm developed by Texas Agrilife Research, Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center, and James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center. The study will be conducted for at least two years at multiple locations in Texas and Louisiana.



Above: Prairie Acacia

### PLANT MATERIALS CENTER STAFF:

**Jim Stevens** – PMC  
Manager

**Melinda Brakie** –  
Assistant PMC  
Manager

**Alan Shadow** – Soil  
Conservationist

**Tim Allen** –  
Biological Technician

**Max McCormack** –  
Part time Technician

The East Texas Plant  
Materials Center is  
open 8:00 am to  
4:30 pm Monday  
through Friday.

The Plant Materials  
program website is:  
[http://plant-  
materials.nrcs.usda.gov](http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov)

## FEATURED PLANT – Weak tephrosia or goat's rue

This plant is also known as goat's rue or weak tephrosia. Weak tephrosia (*Tephrosia onobrychoides* Nutt.) is a native perennial legume and a member of the Fabaceae (Pea) family. It is distributed in east Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Mississippi and commonly found on sandy soils of the western Gulf Coastal Plain. White to reddish-purple flowers develop in May or June and may continue to flower through summer with adequate moisture. After flowering, flat hairy pods up to 2 inches long develop. Inside are smooth, small black seeds (1/8" to 1/4" long). The leaves are pinnately compound with pubescent stems. Cattle will graze young growth, but older growth is usually rejected. The seeds serve as a food source for quail.



Above: Weak tephrosia

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